

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 434

By Beavers

A RESOLUTION to recognize and honor the Smithville-DeKalb County Chamber of Commerce on the occasion of its 50th anniversary.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should salute those organizations that, through the extraordinary efforts of their members, have improved the quality of life for Tennesseans and contributed enormously to economic development; and

WHEREAS, the Smithville-DeKalb County Chamber of Commerce is one such estimable organization that is celebrating 50 years of excellence within the community; and

WHEREAS, the Smithville-DeKalb County Chamber of Commerce came into being with House Bill No. 468 in the Tennessee General Assembly, which became Chapter No. 84 of the Private Acts of 1963, and was signed on March 12, 1963 by Governor Frank Clement; and

WHEREAS, the steering committee members were Merle Meyers, Bill Dyer, George LeFevre, Norval Webb, Glen Nichols, Dr. N.R. Atnip, and James G. "Bobo" Driver; and

WHEREAS, throughout its half-century of existence, this august body has been mission-driven to lead the partnership between a strong commerce and a thriving community, promoting the growth and involvement of its members in economic development, education, recreation and culture, and safety and respect for the beautiful county of DeKalb; and

WHEREAS, the Smithville-DeKalb County Chamber of Commerce represents the business community at work, and it serves as a central agency for community development for industry, the professions, and all civic interest – doing jobs no individual or single entity can do alone and rendering many services that benefit all citizens; and

WHEREAS, numerous examples exist of important initiatives that the Smithville-DeKalb County Chamber of Commerce has spearheaded; early on, construction of a new courthouse and health center, the addition of curbs and sidewalks, and the development of a local airport

and new industrial park were incredibly important accomplishments which wrought great benefits for the entire DeKalb County community and drew accolades from then Congressman Joe L. Evins who was in attendance at the December 1970 Chamber Board meeting; and

WHEREAS, a hallmark accomplishment of the Smithville-DeKalb County Chamber of Commerce was the initiation of the annual Smithville Fiddlers' Jamboree and Crafts Festival in 1972. The first two-day Jamboree attracted 714 musicians representing 16 states, and now some 40 years later, audiences approach 150,000 ardent fans of bluegrass, old-time, and gospel music who gather yearly to bask in the delightful ambience of DeKalb County and relish the cultural talents of nationally and internationally great string music artists and craft artisans who have made this venue legendary; and

WHEREAS, another monumental accomplishment of the Smithville-DeKalb County Chamber of Commerce that came midway through the decade of the 1970s was the establishment of a county-wide fire protection program, which secured four fire engines that provided emergency fire services to locales throughout rural DeKalb County, and the county's capacity to respond and protect citizens' lives and property from destruction by fire has been faithfully supported by the Chamber ever since; and

WHEREAS, 1998 marked the genesis of the Leadership DeKalb Program; for more than a decade this program, which has remained under the able leadership of Director Jen Sherwood, has greatly enriched the leadership corps of DeKalb County and contributed directly to remarkable improvements throughout the county; and

WHEREAS, in March, 1999, Don Rigsby was hired as the first full-time executive director of the Smithville-DeKalb County Chamber of Commerce, and he was ably assisted during his tenure by Suzanne Williams. Upon his departure in 2002 to become Warren County's Economic Developer, Mrs. Williams served as interim executive director; then after consideration of 14 candidates, she was selected as the new executive director to begin January 1, 2003, and continues today serving the Chamber and the community with the excellent assistance of Lou Ann Sanders; and

WHEREAS, the Smithville-DeKalb County Chamber of Commerce has been the catalyst in bringing the Tennessee Downtowns Program to DeKalb County; in 2012 and 2013, many exterior improvements to downtown Smithville buildings have been accomplished. Additionally, a new open air stage located at Evins Park will be used for outdoor concerts and other community events; and

WHEREAS, currently, the Smithville-DeKalb County Chamber of Commerce is guided by president Janna Gillard, past president Kathie McGlamery, vice-president Julia Cantrell, secretary Valerie House, treasurer Jeff Crips, and board directors Kathy Hendrixson, Tony Luna, Lori Manns, Shea Colwell, Craig Gates, Charlotte Parsley, Susan Young, Sue Conley, Raul Ramirez, Sherry Harris, and Stein Prichard; and

WHEREAS, through the dedicated service of its members, the Chamber has been and continues to be an ambassador of excellence for the community and has proven vital to growth and well being throughout all of DeKalb County; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly finds it appropriate to pause in its deliberations to acknowledge and applaud the members and staff of the Smithville–DeKalb County Chamber of Commerce for their 50 years of demonstrated dedication to their county and its respective communities; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and congratulate the members and staff of the Smithville–DeKalb County Chamber of Commerce upon their celebration of 50 years of excellent service to DeKalb County and extend to them our best wishes for every future success.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.